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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: SPECIAL SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Report of the Second Committee (Part III)*

Rapporteur: Ms. Silvia Cristina CORADO-CUEVAS (Guatemala)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 97 (see A/51/605, para. 2). Action on sub-item (b) was taken at the 24th and 37th meetings, on 1 November and 2 December 1996. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/51/SR.24 and 37).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/51/L.9 AND L.41

2. At the 24th meeting, on 1 November, the representative of Costa Rica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and Colombia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries), introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/51/L.9) entitled "Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21", which read:

"The General Assembly,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in several parts, under the symbol A/51/605 and addenda.

"Recalling its resolution 47/190 of 22 December 1992, in which it decided to convene, not later than 1997, a special session, for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21,

"Reaffirming its resolution 50/113 of 20 December 1995, as the agreed basis that determines the modalities for the preparations for the special session, including the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development as the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council mandated to follow-up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as well as the role of other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system,

"Strongly reaffirming that the special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 will be undertaken on the basis of and in full respect of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, in particular principle 7 on the common but differentiated responsibilities of States,

"Taking note of the progress report of the Secretary-General on the state of preparations for the 1997 special session, and taking into account the views and concerns expressed by delegations to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996 and to the Second Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session,

"Stressing that there should be no attempt to renegotiate Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, or other intergovernmental agreements in the field of sustainable development, but that discussion should concentrate on commitments and the further implementation of Agenda 21 and related post-Conference outcomes,

"1. Decides to convene the special session envisaged in General Assembly resolutions 47/190 of 22 December 1992 and 50/113 of 20 December 1995 for a duration of one week, from 23 to 27 June 1997, at the highest possible level of participation;

"2. Decides also that the Commission on Sustainable Development will devote the forthcoming meeting of its ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working group, to be held from 24 February to 7 March 1997, to preparing for the special session, and that the Commission will devote its fifth session, to be held from 7 to 25 April 1997, as a negotiating meeting, to final preparations for the special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21;

"3. Calls upon the international community to engage the full participation of high-level scientific and technical experts, consistent with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, both in preparatory meetings and at the special session itself;

"4. Requests the Secretariat to provide, not later than 15 January 1997, all relevant reports called for in General Assembly

resolution 50/113, including all other reports related to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, for consideration by the ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Sustainable Development and by the Commission at its fifth session;

"5. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that preparations for the comprehensive report are conducted in accordance with paragraph 13 of Assembly resolution 50/113;

"6. Also requests:

"(a) That other contributing reports/inputs to the special session incorporate, without prejudice, information on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the global freshwater assessment and from the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Global Environmental Facility and other bodies of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the regional commissions and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and information on relevant United Nations conventions dealing with the environment, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, on regional and inter-sessional meetings organized by countries and on activities organized by major groups, including business and industry, and non-governmental organizations;

"(b) That, in the context of the special session, specific modalities be recommended for examining all outstanding chapters of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and for undertaking the full review of the Programme of Action in 1999;

"7. Further requests the Secretary-General, in his report for the special session on cross-sectoral issues of Agenda 21, to give special consideration to poverty, financial resources and mechanisms, education, science, the transfer of technology, production and consumption patterns, and trade and environment, with respect to the importance of sectoral issues;

"8. Welcomes the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996, and its relevance to the field of sustainable development, calls for effective interaction and exchange of information on work carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Human Settlements, and invites the Commission on Human Settlements to make a contribution to the special session in connection with the implementation of the Habitat Agenda adopted in Istanbul;

"9. Recognizes the important contributions made by major groups, including non-governmental organizations, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and in the implementation of its

recommendations, and the need for their involvement in preparations for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements for their contributions during the special session;

"10. Invites Governments and regional organizations that have not yet done so to submit their national profiles as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 50/113;

"11. Also invites Governments to assist developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, in participating fully in the special session and its preparatory process, and to make timely contributions to the Trust Fund for Support of the Work of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

"12. Further invites Governments to participate in the proposed joint meeting of ministers of finance and ministers responsible for the environment during the high-level segment of the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

"13. Requests the Secretary-General to enhance the public information programme of the United Nations in order to raise global awareness in a balanced manner, in all countries, of both the special session and the work undertaken by the United Nations in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and invites all Governments to promote widespread dissemination at all levels of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and to make voluntary contributions to support the public outreach activities of the United Nations for the special session;

"14. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session the sub-item 'Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21', and requests the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-second session a report on the special session."

3. At the 37th meeting, on 2 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Mohammad Reza Hadji Karim Djabbary (Islamic Republic of Iran), introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/51/L.41), submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.9.

4. The Secretary of the Committee made a statement regarding the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.41 (see A/C.2/51/SR.37).

5. Before the adoption of the draft resolution, the representative of Papua New Guinea made a statement (see A/C.2/51/SR.37).

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.41 (see para. 8).

7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.41, draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.9 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

8. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 47/190 of 22 December 1992, in which it decided to convene, not later than 1997, a special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21,[1]

Reaffirming its resolution 50/113 of 22 December 1995, as the agreed basis that determines the modalities for the preparations for the special session, including the relevant role of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council mandated to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as well as the role of other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system,

Strongly reaffirming that the special session for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 will be undertaken on the basis of and in full respect of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[2]

Taking note of the progress report of the Secretary-General on the state of preparations for the 1997 special session,[3] and taking into account the views and concerns expressed by delegations to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session, the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session and the Second Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session,

1. Decides to convene the special session envisaged in its resolution 47/190 for a duration of one week, from 23 to 27 June 1997, at the highest political level of participation;

2. Decides also that the Commission on Sustainable Development will devote the forthcoming meeting of its ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working

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[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, (United Nations publication (Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[3] A/51/420.

group, to be held from 24 February to 7 March 1997, to preparing for the special session, and that the Commission will devote its fifth session, to be held from 7 to 25 April 1997 as a negotiating meeting, to final preparations for the special session for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21;

3. Recognizes the important contributions made by major groups, including non-governmental organizations, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and in the implementation of its recommendations, and the need for their effective participation in preparations for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements, taking into account the practice and experience gained at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, for their substantive contributions to and active involvement in the preparatory meetings and the special session, and in that context invites the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States, to propose to Member States appropriate modalities for the effective involvement of major groups in the special session;

4. Decides to invite States members of the specialized agencies which are not members of the United Nations to participate in the work of the special session in the capacity of observers;

5. Stresses that there should be no attempt to renegotiate Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests[4] or other internationally recognized intergovernmental agreements in the field of environment and sustainable development, and that discussions at both the preparatory meetings and the special session should focus on the fulfilment of commitments and the further implementation of Agenda 21 and related post-Conference outcomes;

6. Requests the Secretariat to provide all relevant reports called for in General Assembly resolution 50/113, including all other reports related to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, for consideration by the ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Sustainable Development and by the Commission at its fifth session, in accordance with the six-week rule and preferably not later than 15 January 1997;

7. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that preparations for the comprehensive report are conducted in accordance with paragraph 13 (a), (b), (c) and (d) of Assembly resolution 50/113;

8. Invites the Secretary-General to include in the reports requested in Assembly resolution 50/113 for the preparation of the special session

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[4] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex III.

information on the application of the principles contained in the Rio Declaration, and invites the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to include in its report to the General Assembly at its special session information and views on ways to address, in a forward-looking manner, national, regional and international application of these principles and the implementation of Agenda 21 in the interrelated issues of environment and development;

9. Decides to consider at its special session, inter alia, the application of the principles of the Rio Declaration at all levels - national, regional and international - and to make relevant recommendations thereon;

10. Also requests that other contributions to the special session, in addition to those identified in its resolution 50/113, include submissions from relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations, including the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Global Environmental Facility, information on the outcomes of United Nations conferences held since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, such as the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[5] regional and subregional conferences, summits and other inter-sessional meetings on sustainable development organized by countries, and information on the activities of relevant United Nations conventions on the environment and development and the global freshwater assessment, and that account be taken of the activities organized by major groups, including business and industry and non-governmental organizations;

11. Further requests the Secretary-General, in the report on cross-sectoral issues of Agenda 21 for the special session, to give special consideration, without prejudice to other priority issues that may be identified in the preparatory process, to combating poverty and to health, financial resources and mechanisms, education, science, transfer of technology, consumption and production patterns, trade, environment and sustainable development, major groups, demographic dynamics, capacity-building and decision-making;

12. Requests the Secretary-General, in the reports for the special session, to give consideration, where appropriate and without prejudice to other priority issues that may be identified in the preparatory process, to linkages between the cross-sectoral issues of Agenda 21 and relevant sectoral issues;

13. Welcomes the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996, and its relevance to the field of sustainable development, calls for effective interaction and exchange of information on work carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Human Settlements, and invites the

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[5] Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 94.I.18 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Commission on Human Settlements to make a contribution to the special session in connection with the implementation of the Habitat Agenda[6] adopted in Istanbul;

14. Invites Governments and regional organizations to cooperate with the Secretary-General in preparing country profiles for review at the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as envisaged in paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 50/113;

15. Invites Governments to assist developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, in participating fully in the special session and its preparatory process, and to make timely contributions to the Trust Fund for Support of the Work of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

16. Requests the Secretary-General to enhance the public information programme of the United Nations so as to raise global awareness in a balanced manner, in all countries, of both the special session and the work undertaken by the United Nations in the follow-up to the Conference, and invites all Governments to promote widespread dissemination at all levels of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and to make voluntary contributions to support the public outreach activities of the United Nations for the special session;

17. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session the sub-item entitled "Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21", and requests the Secretary-General to submit to it at that session a report on the special session.

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[6] A/CONF.165/14, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.